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one God, eternal and omnipotent, with messenger attendants; spiritual interpretation of the gross rites yet surviving from primitive times; assurance of eternal felicity to the faithful; belief that the soul was on earth to be proved before its final return to the universal spirit; the existence of an abysmal abode for the evil, against whom the faithful must keep up an unceasing struggle; the destruction of the universe, the death of the wicked, and the eternal happiness of the good in a reconstructed world. With such a conception of latter-day paganism, we may more easily understand its strength and the bitter rivalry between it and the new faith, as well as the facility with which pagan society, once its cause was proved hopeless, turned to Christianity. The religion of Symmachus resembled the Christian faith far more than it resembled the paganism of Augustus.

No one is better qualified than the author of the *Mysteries of Mithras* to render an account of the subject of oriental religion; for in doing this he is writing of activities *quorum pars magna fuit*. These lectures are not compilations, nor mere reviews of progress; they are full of M. Cumont's own contributions, and almost every page bears testimony to his originality and keenness of vision—for he is always *felicissime audax*. It is in its main conclusions, however, not in its details, that the great importance of the work lies; it is not a mere assemblage of evidence for the use of the comparatively few who are students of ancient religion. It is much more. It is a work for society at large—one of the kind whose conclusions are vital and really enter into life, one of the kind which afford a signal justification of the laborious accumulation and ordering of the infinity of details, in themselves petty and insignificant, which compose the foundation of fact for the beautiful structure of appreciation. It is to be hoped that an English translation will soon appear.

GRANT SHOWERMAN

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

Die italischen Rundbauten. Eine archaeologische Studie von
WALTER ALTMANN. Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhand-
lung, 1906. Pp. 101. M. 5.

The circular structure of classical antiquity has always appealed with special force to artists and architects, and the discovery of the primitive round building in the Terramare and elsewhere in comparatively recent times has excited the interest of students in its history. In the present monograph the author undertakes to show that the circular structure was originally the prevailing form throughout Europe, and that it passed through an entirely independent course of development. This development in Italy he treats in three periods—the prehistoric, the historical down to the end of the republic, and the imperial.

In the first period the original round form gave way very largely to the rectangular in the case of dwellings, on account of the frequent necessity of connecting the adjacent houses of settlements. In spite, however, of this rectangular form of dwellings, as illustrated in the Etruscan hut, the circular structure continued an uninterrupted existence, and in the historical period the round temple appears as a native possession of the Italian cults. In working out his thesis the author discusses all the round buildings for which we have any archaeological evidence, thus giving us a very convenient manual of the subject, properly indexed. During the empire the Romans continued to employ the round structure, partly as an independent form, the result of the tendency to perpetuate what had been consecrated from antiquity, and partly as an ordinary architectural element. These motives cannot always be differentiated, but they combined to produce such wonderful results as the Pantheon and the mausoleums of the emperors.

The work is carefully done, is clear in statement, and has already made a place for itself in the literature of the subject.

SAMUEL BALL PLATNER